

What is claimed is:

1. An actuator for actuating an automatic clutch or an automatic transmission, said actuator comprising: a housing that includes an axially-extending first receptacle for slidably receiving a toothed rack, and a second receptacle adjacent to the first receptacle and within which a gear is rotatably carried, wherein the gear is in meshing engagement with the toothed rack, and an electric motor drivingly connected with the gear, wherein the electric motor and the gear are provided as a pre-assembled unit and are connected with the housing.

2. An actuator as claimed in claim 1, wherein the toothed rack is substantially cylindrical, and the first receptacle is substantially a hollow cylinder.

3. An actuator as claimed in claim 1, including an energy accumulator positioned between and in contact with the toothed rack and the housing, and wherein the toothed rack is movable in a first direction of movement that is opposite to a force imposed on the toothed rack by the energy accumulator, and is movable in a second direction by the force of the energy accumulator.

4. An actuator as claimed in claim 3 wherein the energy accumulator contacts the toothed rack at a first protrusion extending outwardly from the toothed rack.

5. An actuator as claimed in claim 4, wherein the first protrusion is a protruding ring.

6. An actuator as claimed in claim 4, wherein the first protrusion is integrally formed with the toothed rack.

7. An actuator as claimed in claim 3, wherein the energy accumulator contacts the housing at an inwardly-extending second protrusion within the housing.

8. An actuator as claimed in claim 7, wherein the second protrusion is a protruding ring.

9. An actuator as claimed in claim 7, wherein the second protrusion is integrally formed with the housing.

10. An actuator as claimed in claim 4, wherein the first protrusion is connected by one of an interlocking, a frictional locking, a force locking, or a material locking connection.

11. An actuator as claimed in claim 1, wherein the toothed rack is axially slidably received within the first receptacle.

12. An actuator as claimed in claim 1, wherein the toothed rack is supported in bearings carried adjacent end areas of the first receptacle.

13. An actuator as claimed in claim 12, wherein the bearings are journal bearings that are carried by the first receptacle.

14. An actuator as claimed in claim 13, wherein one journal bearing defines a stop for the energy accumulator within the housing.